

# **Wirral Metropolitan College**

## **Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2025**

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## Reference and Administrative details

### Board of Governors

A full list of Governors is given on page 21 and 22 of these financial statements.

Lesley Venables acted as Governance Professional throughout the period.

### Senior management team for 2024-25:

Gill Banks, Principal and CEO, Accounting Officer

Kevin Williams, Vice Principal Finance & Resources

Philip Jones, Vice Principal Quality, Adults and Commercial

Christine Carter, Vice Principal Curriculum and Student Experience

Lesley Venables, Governance Professional

**Principal and Registered office:** 10 Europa Boulevard,  
Birkenhead,  
CH41 4NT

### Professional advisers

**External auditors:** Wbg (Audit) Limited  
168 Bath Street  
Glasgow  
G2 4TP

**Internal auditors:** RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP  
Bluebell House  
Brian Johnson Way  
Preston  
PR2 5PE

**Bankers:** Barclays Bank Plc  
182–184 Grange Road  
Birkenhead  
CH41 6EA

**Solicitors:** Eversheds  
70 Great Bridgwater Street  
Manchester  
M1 5ES

# Wirral Metropolitan College

## STRATEGIC REPORT

### Objectives and strategy

The Governing Body present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditor's report for Wirral Metropolitan College for the year ended 31 July 2025.

### Legal status

The Corporation was established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 for the purpose of conducting Wirral Metropolitan College. The College is an exempt charity for the purposes of Part 3 of the Charities Act 2011.

### Mission

Governors maintained the following mission statement during 2024-2025:

*"Empowering Success, Enriching Communities, Supporting Industry".*

### Public Benefit

Wirral Metropolitan College is an exempt charity under Part 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and following Government changes in July 2016 is regulated by the Secretary of State for Education. The members of the Governing Body, who are trustees of the charity, are disclosed on pages 21 and 22.

In setting and reviewing the College's strategic objectives, the Governing Body has had due regard for the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and particularly upon its supplementary guidance on the advancement of education. The guidance sets out the requirement that all organisations wishing to be recognised as charities must demonstrate, explicitly, that their aims are for the public benefit.

In delivering its mission the College provides the following identifiable public benefits through the advancement of education:

- High-quality teaching
- Widening participation and tackling social exclusion
- Excellent employment record for students
- Strong student support systems
- Links with employers, industry, and commerce
- Links with Liverpool City Region (LCR) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)
- Outstanding provision for students with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities
- Access to further education opportunities within the local community particularly with disadvantaged groups
- Other items appertaining to public benefit are referred to in the report

### Implementation of strategic plan

The College's strategic objectives for 2024/25:

#### *Our Mission*

- Empowering Success, Enriching Communities, Supporting Industry

# Wirral Metropolitan College

## *Our Purpose*

- To provide inclusive, highest- quality education and training opportunities to meet the aspirations of students and the needs of the local community and industry

## *We will do this by:*

- Equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, behaviours and qualifications necessary for workforce success and career growth
- Serving as a hub for lifelong learning, community engagement and personal development, enhancing social mobility and economic prosperity

The Corporation monitors the performance of the College against the strategic plans and additionally approves property and financial plans annually.

The College's specific objectives for 2024/2025 and the achievement of those objectives is addressed below.

The targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are monitored through the year by means of a Balanced Scorecard which is considered at each Board meeting and supported by a rigours system of reporting and action planning/impact reviews.

A new strategic plan was produced for 2024 – 2027. The plan outlines the Colleges mission, purpose and values.

## **Performance indicators**

Attendance and retention are illustrated below under “Current and Future Development and Performance”.

Curriculum achievement – The college has successfully reversed four consecutive years of declining achievement rates in Education and Training (E&T), achieving an impressive student success rate of 86.1% (9,837 starts), which exceeds the performance of peer colleges (85%). Additionally, the college's Apprenticeship Achievement Rates stand out at 70.7%, significantly surpassing the national average of 62.6% by 8.1%. This continued progress demonstrates the college's commitment to delivering the best possible outcomes for our students. The College's largest area of activity is for 16–18-year-old learners and within this area the College has continued its year-on-year improvement in 2024/2025. Achievement rates have improved by 0.7% percent from 2023/24, 3.9% from 2022/23 and 3.5% from 21/22. Final achievement rates for this provision (2024/25) are 82.2% which is 0.4% below the latest published national rates.

Safeguarding training compliance – Compliance was 97.04%. (2023/2024 92.44%)

Internal Audit actions – 74% of internal audit actions were closed down after review and approval by the Audit Committee. Audit actions are monitored by the Committee with follow up to ensure that management actions are undertaken in a timely manner.

The College has exceeded its contracted targets for 16-18 year-olds, which has led to growth in funding for 2025/2026. This is a combination of increased market share (more learners choosing to be taught at WMC) and more 16-18 year olds in Wirral.

# Wirral Metropolitan College

## Financial indicators

16-18 years old numbers and income earned – Contracted numbers for 2024/2025 were 2,346 and the College has achieved 2,470. Funded learner numbers in 2025/26 are 2,411, the underlying trend has been of marginal growth since 2022/23.

Apprenticeship income – Earnings for Apprenticeships was £2,357k (2023/24 £2,358k) and exceeded the target set by the College. The College has continued to focus on improving apprenticeship enrolments following a drop in 2020/21 and 2021/22 when the apprenticeship enrolments were affected by the Covid pandemic and a reluctance by employers to take on new apprentices. Whilst the actual number of 'new starts' apprentices were less in 2024/25 than 2023/24 the income remained stable due to delivering high value programmes.

Adult Skills income – The majority of Adult Skills Income comes from Liverpool City Region allocated grant funding, which amounted to £4,039K in 2024/25. The college also delivered an additional £202K from the Liverpool City Region in Free Courses for Jobs funding, which was additional to the grant funding.

The non-devolved Adult Skills Fund funding achieved in 2024/25 was c£153K (2023/24 £137K). This exceeded the allocation with over-delivery of 106% against an allocation of £144,970. The college will receive the additional funding for over-delivery, with the permitted threshold set at 110%. As such, it is expected that there will be no clawback in 2025/2026.

Higher Education income – Income for 2024/2025 was £1,246K (2023/2024 £1,298K). The current economic climate has seen a small reduction in the number of HE enrolments with students choosing employment rather than further study.

Overall income, including capital grant releases, was £32,266K (2023/2024 £30,510K).

## Financial Objectives

The College's financial strategic goals are:

- Ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the college estate, vital for delivering the strategic plan and retaining financial security through effective planning
- Target growth in priority areas, maximising funding opportunities and reinvestment of any surplus into developing future programmes and facilities
- Ensuring our facilities are designed with energy efficiency and resource conservation in mind
- Safely maximise the benefits of AI and digital technologies for innovation, while effectively managing and mitigating risks to tackle any forthcoming challenges confidently

A series of performance indicators have been agreed to monitor the successful implementation of the goals. Detailed monitoring is undertaken by the Finance and Resources Committee, with regular reports to the full governing body.

## Wirral Metropolitan College

### Financial Health

The College is committed to observing the importance of sector measures and indicators. The College is required to complete the annual Finance Record for the DfE.

The College is assessed by the DfE methodology as having a “Requires Improvement” financial health grade.

The current rating of “Requires Improvement” was the below the expected outcome as it was deliberately planned for “Good” in 2024/25, with reserves being released to improve curriculum outcome.

The College is in a stable position to reinvest its surpluses in improved services for students and maintain an excellent breadth of offer.

### FINANCIAL POSITION

#### Financial results

The College generated an operating surplus of £698K (2023/24 £1,915K) before an actuarial pension adjustment in accordance with FRS 102 of (£156K) (2023/24 (£287K)). After this pension adjustment, Total comprehensive income is £542K (2023/24 £1,628K).

The College has accumulated reserves of £23,624K, (2023/24 £23,082K) including a Local Government Pension Fund curtailed at £NIL, (2023/2024 £Nil) and cash and short-term investment balances of £24,777K (2023/2024 £23,702K). Included within this balance is £6.3 million of various capital grants and £6.1 million of own reserves committed towards improvement of the Estate.

Tangible fixed asset additions during the year amounted to £3,996K.

The College has significant reliance on the education sector funding bodies for its principal funding source, largely from recurrent grants. In 2024/2025 the funding bodies provided 87.1% of the College’s total income (2023/2024 86.2%). Whilst historically that was considered a weakness by central overseers, subsequent financial failures in the FE sector have highlighted the importance of focusing upon the quality of the core business regardless of the dependence that may or may not be given on government funding.

#### Treasury policies and objectives

Treasury management is the management of the College’s cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

Treasury management is bound by the College’s Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. The investment of surplus cash is currently placed with the College bankers.

#### Cash flows and liquidity

Net cash flow from operating activities at £1,991k (2023/24 £2,500k), the main source of which was the surplus made in the year.

The total net cash inflow of £1,075k (2023/24 inflow £5,882k) includes the surplus for the year and receipt of £2,034K of deferred capital grants.

The college remains debt-free, having paid off its Loan with Barclays in 2021/22.

## Wirral Metropolitan College

### Reserves Policy

The College has no formal Reserves Policy but recognises the importance of reserves in the financial stability of the organisation and ensures that there are adequate reserves to support the College's core activities. As at the Balance Sheet date, the Income and Expenditure Reserve stands at £23,624k (2023/24 £23,083k). It is the Corporation's intention to continue to invest reserves.

The College keeps cash and reserves to ensure that it can meet unexpected costs, deal with income shortfalls resulting from enrolment reductions or government funding changes and meet the future costs of improving the estate.

## CURRENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE

### Student numbers

In 2024/25 the College has delivered activity that has produced £22,889k in funding body main allocation funding (2023/24 £22,185k). The College had 2470 16-19 students (2023/24 2364) equating to £17,697K of delivery and £4,192K (2023/24 £3,955K) in relation to adults.

### Student achievements

<u>Category</u>	<u>2024/25</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>National Rate</u>
16 –18 years old Retention (including English and Maths)	88.00%	90.10%	-2.10%	91.20%
Adult Retention (including English and Maths)	93.50%	94.50%	-1.00%	92.60%
16 –18 years old Pass Rate (including English and Maths)	93.40%	90.50%	2.90%	92.50%
Adult Pass Rate (including English and Maths)	96.00%	93.80%	2.20%	94.40%
16-18 years old Achievement Rates (including English and Maths)	82.20%	81.50%	0.70%	82.90%
Adult Achievement Rates (including English and Maths)	89.70%	88.60%	1.10%	87.40%
Overall Achievement Rates	86.10%	84.90%	1.20%	85.20%

### Curriculum developments

#### Curriculum Development and Innovation

Wirral Met College's purpose is 'To provide inclusive, highest quality education and training opportunities to meet the aspirations of students and the needs of the local community'. The College is dedicated to preparing students for the world of work and addressing the skills needs of the local economy. As the largest provider of education in Wirral, the College offers a comprehensive range of courses, from entry-level to master's degree level.

In 2024/2025, the College introduced new courses in various fields to meet evolving student needs and expanded its offerings in established areas. This, coupled with strong quality assurance and progression pathways, has led to the College exceeding its educational targets, even in the face of declining demographics.

## **Wirral Metropolitan College**

The College is committed to inclusivity and high aspirations for all learners. Its diverse student body ranges from students with high needs to those aspiring to professional careers. Curriculum planning is designed to ensure effective progression routes for all learners, supported by strong mentoring and a focus on employment market analysis. The College's Career Coach service, available online, provides additional guidance to students.

### **Addressing Specific Needs**

The College offers specialised courses for young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), working closely with local authorities to reduce the NEET population in Wirral. For adults, the College provides opportunities for returning to learning and career advancement, with a focus on meeting the needs of the local economy. The College has strong partnerships with higher education institutions to facilitate seamless progression.

### **Higher Education and Specialist Support**

Wirral Met College is the only College of General Further Education in Wirral and offers a range of higher education courses, providing pathways from Level 1 to Levels 5/6 and 7. The College is committed to ensuring that the local population has access to higher education opportunities that lead to rewarding careers.

To address the increasing number of students with specific needs, such as autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, anxiety, and sensory sensitivities, the College has expanded its Additional Learning Support provision.

### **Payment performance**

The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, which came into force on 1 November 1998, requires Colleges, in the absence of agreement to the contrary, to make payments to suppliers within 30 days of either the provision of goods or services or the date on which the invoice was received. The target set by the Treasury for payment to suppliers within 30 days is 95%. During the accounting period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025, the College paid 90.2% (86% 2023/24) of its invoices within 30 days. The College incurred no interest charges in respect of late payment for this period.

### **Events after the end of the reporting period**

There are no post balance sheet events to report.

### **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

College's curriculum and operational strategy is defined by efficient, effective, and purposeful planning, meticulously engineered to shape a future-ready workforce. This strategic direction is not only designed for sustained economic impact but also to ensure we achieve the highest possible outcomes under the updated Ofsted Further Education and Skills Inspection Toolkit. We are deeply committed to providing a curriculum that meets national, regional, and local skills gaps while actively focusing on future prospects for our learners.

## **Wirral Metropolitan College**

### **Aligned Strategy for High-Quality Provision**

Our provision is deliberately anchored in three interconnected strategies, ensuring a cohesive response to the labour market and a robust foundation for achieving inspection excellence, particularly in the critical area of “Contribution to Skills Needs”:

- **National Alignment (UK’s Modern Industrial Strategy):** We have targeted the IS-8 high-growth sectors to build a pipeline of talent into areas driving national productivity, innovation, and investment.
- **Regional Responsiveness (LSIP / Wirral Economic Strategy):** Our curriculum is co-designed with employers through Industry Partnership Boards to address immediate, place-based skills gaps in the Liverpool City Region, including key priorities like Construction, Warehousing & Logistics, Health and Care, and the vital area of green jobs and skills.
- **Future Focus:** We are proactively investing in emerging areas, exemplified by the Wirral Waters campus serving as a dedicated hub for sustainability and green technologies, positioning our learners at the forefront of the evolving job market

Our core strategic priorities directly correspond to the key evaluation areas within the Ofsted framework, ensuring rigour and high standards across the institution:

#### **Quality of Education:**

- **Quality of Teaching and Learning:** Prioritising excellence in teaching, learning, and assessment to ensure high-quality skill attainment and secure strong learner achievement.

#### **Curriculum Innovation:**

- **Ensuring the curriculum is agile and adapted to meet emerging industry demands (IS-8, Digital, AI),** equipping individuals with skills required for an evolving job market.

#### **Inclusion:**

- **Inclusive Education:** Providing robust and effective support for learners with SEND and high needs, placing Inclusion at the heart of our provision and ensuring accessibility to skills development for all.

#### **Leadership and Governance:**

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Forging strong, impactful partnerships—including our role in the Birkenhead Town's Deal fund—to maximise opportunities and accelerate skills development.

#### **Community Engagement:**

- **Strengthening ties with the local community and investing in facilities to promote educational pathways,** demonstrating effective strategic direction and resource deployment.

## **Wirral Metropolitan College**

### **Key Priorities for Strategic Delivery (Next 5 Years)**

Building on this framework, our immediate key priorities for continued effective and purposeful planning are:

- Fully align post-16 and higher skills provision with the IS-8 and LSIP priorities, ensuring curriculum capacity and specialist staff expertise are developed for advanced manufacturing, digital/AI, and clean energy.
- Fully establish the Wirral Waters campus as the definitive centre for sustainability and green technologies training within Wirral, actively meeting the demand for 'green jobs and skills.
- Intensify engagement with Industry Partnership Boards to ensure curriculum updates are agile and demonstrably reduce regional skills gaps, thereby strengthening our Ofsted judgement for Contribution to Skills Needs.
- Ensure all learners receive high-quality career guidance and that destination data demonstrates clear pathways into employment within the target high-growth sectors or progression to higher levels of study.
- Successfully execute the investment and enhancement plans linked to the Birkenhead Town's Deal fund to improve community access, engagement, and the quality of the learning environment.

This rigorous, outcome-focused approach guarantees that the college is not only contributing to economic growth but is also operating with the efficiency and quality required to secure the best possible outcomes for every learner.

### **Capital investment**

The capital works programme commenced in 2024/25 and all works packages have either been completed or started. Hamilton Training Kitchen, Prep for Life Sensory Garden, Premier Inn Training facility and the new Entrance works to the 12 Quays campus have been completed.

The current projects underway are the Centre for English and Maths, the Motor Vehicles Centre at 12 Quays and the Conway Park Toilet refurbishment.

The College has invested heavily in its estate in recent years following contributions from the Combined Authority and Central Government.

In 2023/24 the College received a grant of £7.70m from the DfE's Capital transformation Fund from DfE. The purpose of this capital funding is to improve the condition of the College's estate based on a previously conducted condition survey.

The College have committed £6.3m of its own resources to contribute to the capital transformational projects and other capital projects. These capital projects will be undertaken during 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The College will continue to seek opportunities to enhance its estate and maintain its outstanding facilities for learners.

# Wirral Metropolitan College

## Energy and Carbon Reporting

The College is committed to reducing its carbon emissions and has taken the following measures in the year to improve energy efficiency:

- Measure 1: LED replacement of all fluorescent and incandescent lighting is ongoing, and LED technologies are introduced in all new Capital projects.
- Measure 2: Continued drive for efficient space utilisation and consolidation of focused curriculum evening activity to a singular campus where previously the curriculum would have been delivered over multiple campuses.

The Colleges greenhouse gas emissions and energy use for the period are set out below:

<b>UK energy use data for the period</b>	<b>1 Aug 2024 to 31 Jul 2025</b>	<b>1 Aug 2023 to 31 Jul 2024</b>
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh)	4,968,357	3,375,423
<u>Emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>		
<u>Scope 1:</u>		
Gas consumption	545.5	321
<u>Scope 2:</u>		
Purchased electricity	360.7	331
<b>Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</b>	<b>906.2</b>	<b>652</b>
Intensity ratio: Metric tonnes per staff member	1.57	1.15

### Qualification and reporting methodology

The college has followed the 2025 UK Government’s conversion factors for company reporting.

### Intensity ratio

The Colleges chosen intensity measurement ratio is emissions in metric tonnes (Co2e) per staff member.

## Wirral Metropolitan College

### Trade union facility time

The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 require the College to publish information on facility time arrangements for trade union officials.

Number of employees who were relevant in the period		FTE employee number
4		3.79
Percentage of time	Number of employees	
0%	0	
1-50%	4	
51-99%	0	
100%	0	
Total cost of facility time		£4,506.62
Total pay bill		£11,795,311
Percentage of total bill spent on facility time		0.04%

### Going concern

The College has net assets and is assessed by the DfE, and is self-assessed, as financially 'Requires Improvement'.

The Governing Body has considered that the College has adequate resources to meet its ongoing liabilities and to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

The College has strong cash resources available. The College's forecast submitted to DfE for 2025/2026 seeks to present a realistic position in a time of national uncertainty and cost of living.

The actual financial position in 2025/2026 will be impacted by:

- Higher staffing salaries to match competitors' offers
- Actual enrolment numbers and patterns
- Other policy decisions on funding allocations and how far they remain responsive to actual requirements.

### Prevent duty

In July 2015 a legal duty was placed on colleges, amongst others, to show "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". The College has put in place certain safeguards in recognition of this. Prevent issues are reported to the Board of Governors as part of Safeguarding, which is a standing item at each meeting.

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The College has a strong structure with regards to Safeguarding. No staff member commences employment before their DBS and vetting checks have been completed.

By the end of 2024/25 96.87% of employees were compliant in Prevent training.

### **Resources**

The College has various resources that it can deploy in pursuit of its strategic objectives. Tangible resources include the five main College sites which each follow dedicated career paths.

### **Financial**

The College has £23.6m of net assets (2023/24 £23.1m) and no debt. The College made a healthy surplus in 2024-25 for reinvestment in staff and curriculum development, together with the maintenance of the estate.

### **People**

During 2024/2025 the College employed on average 576 people (467 expressed as full-time equivalents), of whom 247 are teaching staff (222 FTE). The College continues to review its employment practices to be an employer that is recommended by the staff it employs. During the year, the College finalised its People Strategy and the focus on staff well-being will continue in 2025/2026.

Reviews were undertaken of Appraisal, Staff Survey & Attendance Management in 2024/2025 following the appointment of a new Director & Deputy Director of People & OD with improvements planned for 2025/26.

### **Reputation**

Wirral Met College continues to maintain an excellent reputation locally, regionally, and within the further education sector as a high-quality provider of education and training. The College places strong emphasis on stakeholder engagement and the student experience, recognising that these are central to sustaining and enhancing its public standing.

A wide range of feedback mechanisms are in place, including regular student and staff surveys, focus groups, and formal consultation with the Student Executive Council, Student Representatives, and the Student Governor. These channels ensure that the student voice informs decision-making at all levels and contributes directly to continuous improvement in the quality of teaching, learning, and support.

Student satisfaction levels remain consistently high and compare favourably with national benchmarks. The College continues to demonstrate improved outcomes across all provision types, in terms of achievement and progression to higher levels of study, apprenticeships, and employment.

Wirral Met College is also mindful of its civic role within the community and its responsibility to promote values of ambition, resilience, inclusivity, empowerment and accountability.

Students engage in a wide range of enrichment and voluntary activities that contribute positively to the local community and support the development of personal and professional skills.

## Wirral Metropolitan College

Through these sustained efforts, Wirral Met College continues to build trust and confidence among students, parents, employers, and partner organisations, reinforcing its reputation as a college of choice for learners and as a key anchor institution within the Liverpool City Region.

### Principal risks and uncertainties

The College continued to undertake significant work during the year in partnership with the Internal Auditors to develop and embed the systems of internal control, including financial, operational and risk management, which are designed to protect the College's assets and reputation.

The Senior Leadership Team undertakes a comprehensive review of the risks to which the College is exposed. It identifies systems and procedures, including specific preventable actions which should mitigate any potential impact on the College, and considers any new risks which may arise because of work undertaken by the College, changes to Government policies or funding rules.

The internal controls are then implemented, and the subsequent year's appraisal will review their effectiveness and progress against risk mitigation actions.

A risk register is maintained at College level which is considered at every Audit Committee and Board meeting and is formally reviewed at the end of each year. The Audit Committee also considers and recommends for approval by the Board the Internal Audit Plan for the following year.

The risk register identifies the key risks, the likelihood of those risks occurring, their potential impact on the College and the actions being taken to reduce and mitigate the risks. Risks are prioritised using a consistent scoring system.

Outlined below is a description of the principal risk factors that may affect the College. Not all the factors are within the College's control. Other factors besides those listed below may also adversely affect the College.

### Government funding

The College's main sources of funding are from public sources. In 2024/25 87.1% (2023/24 86.2%) of the College's income arose from Government funding.

The College's response to this risk is as follows:

- Ensure that the College exceeds its student number targets from the Government. The College must earn the income it receives from public sources through delivering sufficient provision. Engagement with local employers and the community to exceed student targets places the College in the best position to avoid funding cuts and to receive additional funding allocations in future years.
- Continually review College operations to ensure that they perform in an efficient manner. The more efficient the College is at delivering skills, the greater will be its positive impact upon the community and the more robust the College will be in its ability to react to future changes.

As a result of continually ensuring that the College's "product" is reflective of student and employer needs, combined with efficient financial management, Wirral Metropolitan College has managed to maintain good financial stability.

## Wirral Metropolitan College

### Infrastructure

The College has a medium-term Estates Strategy up to 2025-2030. That strategy considers the effectiveness of the estate and is coupled with both the Finance Strategy and Curriculum Strategy.

This Estates Strategy has been formulated utilising guidance first published by the Learning and Skills Council. Although dating back over 20 years, this guidance remains relevant as it allows the College to adopt a methodology which identifies how well the existing estate supports the delivery of core aims and objectives and subsequently put in place a capital investment plan to rectify any inherent risks.

The Estates Strategy is underpinned by the following aims:

- Realise the College's vision and values
- Maintain a visible presence across the College's catchment area
- Ensure that physical resources are aligned to the needs of students, staff and employer partners
- Work with partners to respond to local, regional and national skills priorities
- Ensure physical resources are functionally suitable and industry standard
- Ensure all buildings are classified as either condition 'A' (very good) or 'B' (good) upon completion of all phases of the preferred option
- Improve space efficiency (gross internal area) and levels of room utilisation (timetabled academic space)
- Proactively manage and / or eliminate maintenance liabilities through the implementation of the preferred option
- Use capital investment to contribute towards realising the College's Environmental and Sustainability Policy.

### Quality

In October 2023, Wirral Met College underwent a full Ofsted inspection, which resulted in an overall grade of Requires Improvement. The inspection, however, recognised areas of strong performance, with the College's High Needs provision achieving an Outstanding grade.

Following the inspection, the College's Senior Leadership Team implemented a robust improvement and monitoring plan designed to accelerate progress across all curriculum areas. This plan is underpinned by clear milestones, rigorous self-assessment, and regular review by governors to ensure sustained improvement in teaching, learning, and outcomes.

In November 2024, Ofsted conducted a favourable monitoring visit, which confirmed that the College was making reasonable progress in addressing all areas for improvement identified in the 2023 inspection. Inspectors noted the positive impact of strengthened leadership, improved curriculum planning, and enhanced student support on the overall quality of provision.

## **Wirral Metropolitan College**

Over the past two years, the College has demonstrated year-on-year improvement in outcomes across all provision types, including study programmes, apprenticeships, and adult learning. Student achievement and progression indicators continue to rise, reflecting the College's unwavering commitment to continuous improvement in outcomes for students.

Through strategic investment, staff development, and prudent financial management, Wirral Met College remains firmly focused on providing high-quality education that enables every student to fulfil their potential and progress successfully to higher study, employment, or training.

### **Staffing costs**

In 2024/2025 the College has seen fierce competition from other FE colleges for teaching staff, particularly within the construction curriculum areas, where qualified staff are being poached by neighbouring Colleges.

The College's lecturing staffing cost as a proportion of turnover is higher than other colleges. Whilst this enables the College to provide additional support to students, over the longer term this ratio will need to reduce.

## **STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS**

Wirral Met College recognises the vital role that strong stakeholder relationships play in achieving its mission to deliver high-quality education, develop skills for employment, and promote the wellbeing of individuals and communities across the Liverpool City Region. The College values its partnerships and is committed to transparent communication, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

### **Key Stakeholders**

- Governors
- Staff and Trade Unions
- Students and Customers
- Employers
- Community and Third Sector Organisations

### **Strategic Partners**

- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership
- Local Authorities and Elected Members
- Wirral Chamber of Commerce
- Housing Associations
- National Apprenticeship Service
- Association of Colleges
- Sector Skills Councils and Professional Bodies
- National Retail Academy

### **Contracting and Funding Partners**

- Funding Agencies and Government Departments

The College maintains open and proactive engagement with all stakeholders through structured meetings, formal consultations, partnership forums, surveys, and its website. Regular

## **Wirral Metropolitan College**

communication ensures that stakeholder views inform strategic planning, curriculum design, and service delivery.

Wirral Met College operates a formal compliments and complaints procedure accessible to all students and service users. Complaints consistently represent less than 1% of the student population and are analysed alongside other feedback mechanisms such as the Student Voice to identify any potential areas for improvement. Each complaint is investigated thoroughly, with findings used to strengthen processes and enhance the overall quality of provision.

The College continues to consult widely with students, employers, and community partners to drive service enhancement and share best practice. This collaborative approach reinforces Wirral Met College's reputation as a trusted, responsive, and community-focused institution committed to meeting the skills and wellbeing needs of the Wirral and wider Liverpool City Region.

### **Equal opportunities and inclusivity**

Equal opportunities and inclusivity Wirral Metropolitan College is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all who learn and work here.

It respects and values positively differences in race, gender, transgender identity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, ability, socio-economic status, marital status, pregnancy/maternity, and age. It strives vigorously to remove conditions which place people at a disadvantage and will actively combat unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. It also strives to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

This policy will be resourced, implemented, and monitored on a planned basis. The College's Equality & Diversity Policy and related documentation is published on the College's internet site. The College has retained the Level Two Disability Confident Employer Award (formerly the Two Ticks Award). It continues to consider all applications for employment from disabled persons, bearing in mind the aptitude of the individual concerned and its recruitment portal facilitates this approach. Where an existing employee becomes disabled, every reasonable adjustment is made to ensure that employment with the College continues, including where relevant advice sought from the organisation occupational health partners. The College's policy is to provide training, career development and opportunities for promotion that are, as far as possible, identical to those for other employees. The College values all members of the community and strives to be an inclusive institution for the benefit of all. The College has a Director who is responsible for EDI and steering groups have been implemented to focus on improving EDI practices across College. An employee-led EDI Network group, promoting awareness of EDI matter and sharing stories through lived experience has been launched

The College's gender pay gap information is shown below. It should be noted that although there is a gender pay gap this does not mean that there is a difference of pay between genders. Instead, it highlights the roles that genders typically apply for in the institution. WMC operates a wholly merit based approach to its recruitment selection procedures with checks and balances to ensure that this is the case and the unconscious bias is understood and managed by hiring managers.

The gender pay gap only represents the tendency for females to apply for administrative roles within the College because of their particularly family friendly terms and conditions.

Gender representation remained stable at Leadership and management level, with near parity between male and female leaders. This balance suggests an equitable approach to leadership appointments over the year. Gender equality in senior leadership positions remained constant at 50/50,

## Wirral Metropolitan College

	<b>2024/2025 Gender pay gap report (snapshot date 31 March 2025)</b>
Mean gender pay gap	14.3%
Median gender pay gap	11.1%

The proportion of males and females in each quartile of the pay distribution are:

	Males	Females
1 - Lower quartile	20%	80%
2	33.3%	66.7%
3	32%	68%
4 – Upper quartile	61.2%	38.8%

### Disability statement

The College seeks to achieve the objectives set down in the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014.

It continues to implement a programme of planned improvements and adaptations and has an Equality & Diversity Policy and Action Plan, which includes commitment and actions to promote disability equality. This ensures that the College makes all reasonable adjustments to support people with disabilities as far as is reasonably practicable.

The College has a range of assistive technologies available to support students with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Applicants who indicate that they have a requirement for additional learning support and/or disabilities are assessed as part of their application and enrolment process and a detailed assessment of their individual needs is carried out. Support plans are then implemented to help them achieve their individual learning goals.

All staff in the College have a responsibility to support students with disabilities and to refer students for specialist support as necessary. There is a team of specialist teachers and Learning Support Assistants that support both discrete programmes and students in mainstream programmes. In addition to general support staff, there are specialists with skills and qualifications who support students with specific learning difficulties, moderate or complex learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, sensory impairments, physical impairments and mental health difficulties.

Teaching, learning support and student services staff have had staff development to improve their responsiveness and awareness of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Where reasonable, the College makes adjustments for disabled students to access the College and the curriculum. There is a range of specialist programmes which provide a greater level of support in smaller groups for learners with more complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Wirral Metropolitan College

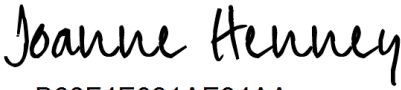
This area was described as outstanding in the 2010 OFSTED Inspection, and this was again confirmed during the 2015 and 2017 and 2023 OFSTED inspections.

College support services include learning support assistants, carers, communication support workers, specialist support tutors, pastoral coaches, counselling, careers advice and finance/welfare advice, details of which are found on the Student intranet site.

### Disclosure of information to auditors

The members who held office at the date of approval of this report confirm that, so far as they are each aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the College's auditors are unaware; and each member has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the College's auditors are aware of that information.

**Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:**

Signed by:  
  
B68F4E031AE94AA...

**Joanne Henney, Chair of governors**

# Wirral Metropolitan College

## Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control

The following statement is provided to enable readers of the annual report and accounts of the College to obtain a better understanding of its governance and legal structure.

The College endeavours to conduct its business:

- in accordance with the seven principles identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership);
- in full accordance with the guidance to Colleges from the Association of Colleges in the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges (“the Code”); and
- having due regard to the UK Corporate Governance Code 2024 insofar as it is applicable to the further education sector.
- In accordance with funding rules laid down by the Office for Students contained in the “Regularity Advice 9: Accounts Direction” instruction to ensure regularity in the use of this public funding and propriety in the use of public funding.
- In accordance to the regulations set out in HM Treasury’s “Managing Public Money”, following the reclassification of FE colleges as public sector organisations in November 2023

The College is committed to exhibiting best practice in all aspects of corporate governance and in particular the College has adopted and complied with the Association of Colleges’ Code of Good Governance. The Corporation has not adopted, and therefore does not apply, the UK Corporate Governance Code 2024. However, it has reported on its corporate governance arrangements by drawing upon best practice available, including those aspects of the UK Corporate Governance Code that it considers to be relevant to the further education sector and best practice.

College policies, procedures and approval processes were updated to ensure compliance with new requirements following the reclassification on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The College has established systems and processes to identify and handle particular transactions, where DfE approval is required.

In the opinion of the Governors, the College exceeds the provisions of the Code, and it has complied with the Code throughout the year ended 31 July 2025. The Governing Body recognises that, as a body entrusted with both public and private funds, it has a particular duty to observe the highest standards of corporate governance at all times. In carrying out its responsibilities, it takes full account of the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges 2023.

## THE CORPORATION

The members who served on the Corporation during the year and subsequent to the year-end were as listed in the following table.

Governor	Date of appointment	Term of office	Date of resignation	Status of appointment	Committees served	Attendance
Lucky Ali	9 Jun 2021	4 years	31.07.2025	External	Board Audit	17% 50%

## Wirral Metropolitan College

Ali Amirkhalili	18 Dec 2023	3 years		External	Board Audit	83% 100%
Gary Baines	1 Aug 2021 1 Aug 2022	1 year 4 years		Co-opted External	Board Audit Remuneration	100% 100% 100%
Gill Banks	1 Aug 2023	In post		Principal/CEO	Board Finance & Resources Gov & Search Quality & Stds	100% 100% 100% 100%
Ian Evans	29 Mar 2023	4 years		Staff	Board Finance & Resources	83% 100%
Paul Gaskell	14 Dec 2023	4 years		External	Board Finance & Resources Remuneration	100% 100% 100%
Penny Haughan	14 Dec 2023	3 years		External	Board Gov & Search Audit Quality & Stds Remuneration	100% 50% 100% 100% 50%
Joanne Henney	14 Dec 2023	4 years		External	Board Finance & Resources Gov & Search Remuneration	67% 60% 100% 100%
Karen Lowe	14 Dec 2023	4 years		External	Board Audit	83% 100%
Paul Smith	27 Feb 2019 17 Oct 2023	4 years 3 years		External	Board Finance & Resources Quality & Stds	100% 60% 100%
Phil Vickerman	14 Dec 2023	4 years		External	Board Gov & Search Quality & Stds	83% 100% 75%
Debbie Wilkinson	19 Mar 2024	3 years		External	Board Quality & Stds	67% 50%
Simon Wrigley	16 Feb 2022	4 years		Staff	Board Quality & Stds	100% 100%
Ethan Stewart	14 Dec 2024	1 year	31 Jul 2025	Student	Board Quality & Standards	40% 0%
Lesley Venables	1 August 2018	In post		. Governance Professional		

It is the Corporation's responsibility to bring independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance, resources and standards of conduct.

The Corporation is provided with regular and timely information on the overall financial performance of the College, together with other information such as performance against funding targets, proposed capital expenditure, quality matters and personnel related matters such as health and safety and environmental issues. The Corporation meets formally on five occasions each year and usually holds two planning seminars.

The Corporation conducts some of its business through committees. Each committee has terms of reference, which have been approved by the Corporation. The committees are: Audit, Governance & Search, Finance & Resources, Quality & Standards Scrutiny and Remuneration. Full minutes of all meetings, except those deemed to be confidential by the Corporation, are available on the College website or from the Governance Professional at:

## **Wirral Metropolitan College**

Wirral Metropolitan College  
Conway Park  
Europa Boulevard  
Birkenhead  
Merseyside  
CH41 4NT

The Governance Professional maintains a register of financial and personal interests of the governors. The register is available for inspection at the above address.

All governors are able to take independent professional advice in furtherance of their duties at the corporation's expense and have access to the Governance Professional, who is responsible to the Board for ensuring compliance with all applicable procedures and regulations. The appointment, evaluation and removal of the Governance Professional are matters for the Corporation as a whole.

Formal agendas, papers and reports are supplied to governors in a timely manner prior to Board meetings. Briefings are also provided on an ad-hoc basis.

The Corporation has a strong and independent non-executive element, and no individual or group dominates its decision-making process. The Corporation considers that each of its nonexecutive members is independent of management and free from any business or other relationship, which could materially interfere with the exercise of their independent judgement.

There is a clear division of responsibility in that the roles of the Chair of the Corporation and the Principal of the College are separate.

### **Appointments to the Corporation**

There are currently places for 17 members of the Corporation including the Principal plus two governors nominated by the College staff and 2 student governors. Any new appointments to the Corporation are made by the Corporation as a whole. The Corporation has a Governance and Search Committee comprising four Corporation members, which is responsible for the selection and nomination of any new external member for appointment by the Corporation. The Corporation's policy on the selection of governors is available on the College website.

Governors are appointed for a term of office not exceeding four years. The Corporation maintains a skills audit of members and seeks to ensure that a wide range of skills, expertise and diversity is present amongst governors to encourage effective challenge and scrutiny of management plans and actions.

Reappointments are only made after consideration by the Governance & Search Committee of issues such as individual attendance and contribution, which then makes a recommendation to the full Board.

The existing Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporation were appointed for a 2 year term of office with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

### **Corporation performance**

The Board undertakes an assessment of performance annually, which includes the Corporation, individual governors, committees, and the Chair of the Board. An external governance review was undertaken by an independent consultant in 2024. The outcomes of this process were presented to the Board at its meeting on 23rd October 2024 and it was agreed that there were no significant gaps in the Board's processes, but some opportunities for further improvement or

## Wirral Metropolitan College

refinement. Monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations from the self-assessment is carried out by the Governance & Search Committee.

### Remuneration Committee

Throughout the year ending 31 July 2025, the College's Remuneration Committee comprised the Chair and Vice Chair (ex officio) and two other eligible members of the Board of Governors. The Chair of the Board is not the Chair of the Committee.

Details of senior postholder remuneration for the year ended 31 July 2025 are set out in note 7 to the financial statements.

### Audit Committee

The Audit Committee comprises 3 eligible members of the Corporation (excluding the Principal, the Chair, the staff, and student governors) and may also include one co-opted member. The Committee operates in accordance with written terms of reference approved by the Corporation, which align to the DfE's Post-16 Audit Code of Practice/Guide for College Auditors. Its purpose is to advise the Corporation on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's systems of internal control and its arrangements for risk management control and governance processes.

The Audit Committee meets at least on a termly basis and provides a forum for reporting by the College's internal, regularity, and financial statement auditors, who have access to the Committee for independent discussion, without the presence of College management. The Committee also receives and considers all external reports from the agencies as they affect the College's business.

The College's internal auditors monitor the systems of internal control, risk management controls and governance processes in accordance with an agreed plan of input and report their findings to management and the Audit Committee.

Management is responsible for the implementation of agreed audit recommendations and Internal Audit undertakes periodic follow up reviews to ensure such recommendations have been implemented.

The Audit Committee also advises the Corporation on the appointment of internal, regularity and financial statement auditors and their remuneration for both audit and non-audit work.

The Committee met four times in the year to 31 July 2025, the members of the Committee and their attendance records are shown below:

### Committee member Meetings attended

Gary Baines (External Governor)	4 Committee Chair
Lucky Ali (External Governor)	2
Ali Amirkhalili (External Governor)	3
Karen Lowe (External Governor)	4
Penny Haughan (External Governor)	4

### Internal control

#### *Scope of responsibility*

The Corporation is ultimately responsible for the College's system of internal control and for reviewing its effectiveness. However, such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

## Wirral Metropolitan College

The Corporation has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Principal, as Accounting Officer, for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the College's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which she is personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to her in the DfE Education and Skills agreement between Wirral Metropolitan College and the Education and Skills Funding Agency. She is also responsible for reporting to the Corporation any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

### *The purpose of the system of internal control*

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of College policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Wirral Metropolitan College for the year ended 31 July 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts.

### *Capacity to handle risk*

The Corporation has reviewed the key risks to which the College is exposed, together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Corporation is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the College's significant risks that has been in place for the period ending 31 July 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts. This process is regularly reviewed by the Corporation.

### *The risk and control framework*

The system of internal control is based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures including the segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. It includes:

- Comprehensive budgeting systems with an annual budget, which is reviewed and agreed by the Board of Governors. This is built from the bottom up to create an aggregate position for the College and prevent the inclusion of any "hope factor" in the forecasts. The College's approach to management accounting and cashflow management is considered an exemplar when compared to the sector guidance issued by ESFA/DfE.
- Regular reviews by the Board of Governors of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance
- Clearly defined capital investment control guidelines
- The adoption of formal project management disciplines, where appropriate

Wirral Metropolitan College has appointed an internal audit service, which operates in accordance with the requirements of the DfE's Post 16 Audit Code of Practice. The work of the internal audit service is informed by an analysis of the risks to which the College is exposed, and annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. The analysis of risks and the internal audit plans are approved by the Corporation on the recommendation of the Audit Committee. As a minimum annually, the Head of Internal Audit (HIA) provides the Board of Governors with a report on internal audit activity in the College.

## Wirral Metropolitan College

The internal audit assurance service operated in accordance with the requirements of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice.

### *Statement from the Audit Committee*

The Audit Committee has advised the Board of Governors that the Corporation has an effective framework for governance and risk management and effective internal controls in place.

The College appoints internal auditors to undertake a rolling programme of audits covering all areas of the College's operations. Their programme of work is set by the Audit Committee in advance of the year with recommendations from the internal auditors regarding the areas to be covered.

Areas are selected on a risk-based approach attempting to review areas that are likely to be highest risk more often whilst covering those of lower risk less frequently (but still within a programme of audit).

The College benchmarks its audit days against the rest of the sector through the DfE financial benchmarking reports.

### *Review of effectiveness*

As Accounting Officer, the Principal has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. Her review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- The work of the internal auditors
- The work of the executive managers within the College who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework
- Comments made by the College's regularity and financial statements auditors in their management letters and other reports

The Principal has been advised on the implications of the result of her review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Audit Committee, which oversees the work of the internal auditor, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

The Principal and the senior leadership team receive reports setting out key performance and risk indicators and considers possible control issues brought to their attention by early warning mechanisms, which are embedded within the departments and reinforced by risk awareness training.

The Principal, the senior leadership team and the Audit Committee also receive regular reports from Internal Audit, which include recommendations for improvement. The Audit Committee's role in this area is confined to a high-level review of the arrangements for internal control. The Corporation's agenda includes a regular item for consideration of risk and control, and it receives reports thereon from the senior leadership team and the Audit Committee. The emphasis is on obtaining the relevant degree of assurance and not merely reporting by exception. At its October 2025 meeting the Corporation carried out the annual self-assessment for the year ended 31 July 2025 by considering documentation from the senior leadership team and Internal Audit and taking account of events since 31 July 2025.

Based on the advice of the Audit Committee and the Principal, the Corporation is of the opinion that the College has an adequate and effective assurance arrangements, assurance over

## Wirral Metropolitan College


subcontracting, the framework for governance, risk management and control processes and, and has fulfilled its statutory responsibility for *“the effective and efficient use of resources the solvency of the institution and the body and the safeguarding of their assets”*.

### Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Corporation considers that the College has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. These are underpinned by quality and efficiency measures aimed at improving the quality and financial status of the College.

**Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:**

**Signed**

Signed by:  
  
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**Joanne Henney**  
**Chair of governors**

**Signed**

Signed by:  
  
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**Gill Banks**  
**Principal/Accounting Officer**

## **Wirral Metropolitan College Statement on the College's Regularity, Propriety and Compliance with Funding Body Terms and Conditions of Funding**

As accounting officer of the corporation of Wirral Metropolitan College, I confirm that I have had due regard to the framework of authorities governing regularity, propriety and compliance, including the college's accountability agreement with DfE, and the requirements of the College Financial Handbook. I have also considered my responsibility to notify the corporation's board of governors and DfE of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding.

I confirm that I, and the board of governors, are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of all funds by the corporation, or material non-compliance with the framework of authorities.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or non-compliance have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to the board of governors and DfE.

Signed by:



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**Gill Banks**  
**Principal/Accounting officer**  
**Date**

### **Statement of the Chair of the Board of Governors**

On behalf of the corporation, I confirm that the accounting officer has discussed their statement of regularity, propriety and compliance with the board and that I am content that it is materially accurate.

Signed by:



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**Joanne Henney**  
**Chair of governors**  
**Date**

## Wirral Metropolitan College

### Statement of Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation

The members of the corporation are required to present audited financial statements for each financial year.

Within the terms and conditions of the college's accountability agreement, funding agreements and contracts with ESFA and DfE, the corporation is required to prepare financial statements which give a true and fair view of the financial performance and position of the corporation for the relevant period. Corporations must also prepare a strategic report which includes an operating and financial review for the year. The bases for the preparation of the financial statements and strategic report are the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting for Further and Higher Education, DfE's College Accounts Direction and the UK's Generally Accepted Accounting Practice. In preparing the financial statements, the corporation is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- assess whether the corporation is a going concern, noting the key supporting assumptions, qualifications or mitigating actions, as appropriate (which must be consistent with other disclosures in the accounts and auditor's report), and
- prepare financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to assume that the corporation will continue in operation.

The Corporation is also required to prepare a strategic report, in accordance with paragraphs 3.23 to 3.27 of the FE and HE SORP, that describes what it is trying to do and how it is going about it, including information about the legal and administrative status of the corporation.

The corporation is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the corporation and which enable it to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with relevant legislation including the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and Charities Act 2011 (as amended), and relevant accounting standards. It is responsible for taking steps that are reasonably open to it to safeguard its assets and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The corporation is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of its website(s); the work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and, accordingly, auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the corporation are responsible for ensuring that expenditure and income are applied for the purposes intended and that the financial transactions conform to the authorities that govern them. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring that funds from ESFA, DfE, and any other public funds, are used only in accordance with the accountability agreement, funding agreements and contracts and any other conditions, that may be prescribed from time to time by DfE, or any other public funder, including that any transactions entered into by the corporation are within the delegated authorities set out in the College Financial Handbook. On behalf of the corporation, the

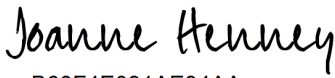
## Wirral Metropolitan College

chair of the board of governors is responsible for discussing the accounting officer's statement of regularity, propriety and compliance with the accounting officer.

Members of the Corporation must ensure that there are appropriate financial and management controls in place to safeguard public and other funds and ensure they are used properly. In addition, members of the corporation are responsible for securing economic, efficient, and effective management of the corporation's resources and expenditure so that the benefits that should be derived from the application of public funds from DfE, ESFA and other public bodies are not put at risk.

**Approved by order of the members of the corporation on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:**

Signed by:

  
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**Joanne Henney**

**Chair of the Board of Governors**

# Wirral Metropolitan College

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE CORPORATION OF WIRRAL METROPOLITAN COLLEGE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025

### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Wirral Metropolitan College (the 'College') for the year ended 31 July 2025 which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Changes in Reserves, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cashflows and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the College's affairs as at 31 July 2025, and of its income and expenditure, gains and losses and changes in reserves, and cash flows for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting for Further and Higher Education; and
- meet the requirements of the Accounts Direction issued by the Office for Students ('the OfS Accounts Direction').

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) ("ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the College in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Corporation's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the College's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Corporation with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Report and Financial Statements, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Corporation is responsible for the

## Wirral Metropolitan College

other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements, or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Colleges issued by the Department for Education requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Regulatory Advice 9: Accounts Direction issued by the Office for Students requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- where applicable, funds from whatever source administered by the provider for specific purposes have not been properly applied to those purposes and managed in accordance with relevant legislation; or
- where applicable, funds provided by the OfS, UK Research and Innovation (including Research England), the Department for Education have not been applied in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions; or
- the requirements of the OfS's accounts direction have not been met; or
- the provider's grant and fee income, as disclosed in the note to the accounts, has been materially misstated; or
- the College's expenditure on access and participation activities for the financial year has been materially misstated

### Responsibilities of the Corporation

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation, the Corporation is responsible for the preparation of financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Corporation determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Corporation is responsible for assessing the College's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Corporation either intend to liquidate the College or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

# Wirral Metropolitan College

## Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and with ISAs (UK). Those standards require us to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The specific procedures for this engagement and the extent to which these are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

### Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud

We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and then design and perform audit procedures response to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

In identifying and assessing the risks or material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations we considered the following;

- The nature of the College, the environment in which it operates and the control procedures implemented by management and the Corporation; and
- Our enquiries of management and the Corporation about their identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities.

Based on our understanding of the College and the sector we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to, but were not limited to;

- Regulations and legislation pertinent to the College's operations;
- Compliance with the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Colleges 2024 to 2025;
- Compliance with the requirements of the Department for Education and the Office for Students; and
- Compliance with the requirements of the Office for Standards in Education;

We considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material impact on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations which have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements, such as the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2019 and the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Colleges 2024 to 2025.

We evaluated management and governors' incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of management override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to;

## Wirral Metropolitan College

- Posting inappropriate journal entries.

### **Audit response to the risks identified;**

Our procedures to respond to the risks identified included the following;

- Gaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the College and the sector in which it operates;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- Enquiring of management, the audit committee, the internal auditors and legal advisors concerning actual and potential litigation and claims; and
- Reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance, reviewing internal audit reports and reviewing correspondence with the Department for Education, the Office for Students and the Office for Standards in Education.

In addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; evaluating rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

Review of journals included but was not limited to the following areas:

- Deferred capital grants
- Prepayments & Accruals
- Deferred income and other creditors
- Grant income
- Wages and salaries
- Depreciation

We also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members, and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the Corporation, as a body, in accordance with the Funding Agreement published by the Department for Education and our engagement letter.

Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Corporation, as a body, those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent

## Wirral Metropolitan College

permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Corporation, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

**Signed by:**

Wbg (Audit) Limited

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**Wbg (Audit) Limited**

Statutory Auditor  
168 Bath Street  
Glasgow  
G2 4TP

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025

# **Wirral Metropolitan College**

## **Reporting accountant's assurance report on regularity**

### **Independent reporting accountant's report on regularity to the corporation of Wirral Metropolitan College and the Secretary of State for Education**

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter and further to the requirements of Department for Education (DfE), as included in the extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Colleges, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether anything has come to our attention that would suggest, in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received by Wirral Metropolitan College during the period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 have not been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament or the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

This report is made solely to the corporation of Wirral Metropolitan College and the Secretary of State for Education in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the corporation of Wirral Metropolitan College and the Secretary of State those matters we are required to state in a report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept, or assume, responsibility to anyone other than the corporation of Wirral Metropolitan College and the Secretary of State for Education for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

#### **Respective responsibilities of Wirral Metropolitan College and the reporting accountant**

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of the corporation's accountability agreement with the Secretary of State for Education and the College Financial Handbook, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament, and that the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Colleges. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work, which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 have not been applied for the purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

#### **Approach**

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Colleges issued by DfE, which requires a limited assurance engagement, as set out in our engagement letter.

The objective of a limited assurance engagement is to perform such procedures as to obtain information and explanations in order to provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express a negative conclusion on regularity. A limited assurance engagement is more limited in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in a reasonable assurance engagement. Accordingly, we do not express a positive opinion.

Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity and propriety of the corporation's income and expenditure.

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- Documenting the framework of authorities which govern the activities of the College;

## Wirral Metropolitan College

- Undertaking a risk assessment based on our understanding of the general control environment and any weaknesses in internal controls identified by our audit of the financial statements;
- Reviewing the self-assessment questionnaire which supports the representations included in the Chair of Governors and Accounting Officer's statement on regularity, propriety and compliance with the framework of authorities;
- Testing transactions with related parties;
- Confirming through enquiry and sample testing that the College has complied with its procurement policies and that these policies comply with delegated authorities; and
- Reviewing any evidence of impropriety resulting from our work and determining whether it was significant enough to be referred to in our regularity report.

### Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament, and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities that govern them.

**Signed by:**

Wbg (Audit) Limited

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### Wbg (Audit) Limited

Statutory Auditors  
168 Bath Street  
Glasgow  
G2 4TP

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Statement of Comprehensive Income

		Year ended 31 July	Year ended 31 July
		2025 £'000	2024 £'000
<b>Income</b>	<b>Notes</b>		
Funding Body grants	2	28,097	26,305
Tuition fees and education contracts	3	1,491	1,536
Other grants and contracts	4	1,975	1,725
Other income	5	260	258
Investment income	6	444	686
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total income</b>		<b>32,267</b>	<b>30,510</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Staff costs	7	22,602	19,673
Other operating expenses	8	7,171	6,847
Depreciation	10	1,889	1,700
Interest and other finance costs	9	(93)	375
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>31,569</b>	<b>28,595</b>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Surplus before other gains and losses</b>		<b>698</b>	<b>1,915</b>
loss on disposal of assets		-	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Surplus before taxation</b>		<b>698</b>	<b>1,915</b>
Taxation		-	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>698</b>	<b>1,915</b>
Unrealised surplus on revaluation		-	-
Revaluation of defined benefit pension liability		(156)	(287)
<b>Total Comprehensive Income</b>		<b>542</b>	<b>1,628</b>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Represented by:</b>			
Restricted comprehensive Income		-	-
Unrestricted comprehensive Income		542	1,628
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total Comprehensive Income</b>		<b>542</b>	<b>1,628</b>

**Wirral Metropolitan College – Statement of Changes in Reserves**

	Income and Expenditure Account	Revaluation reserve	Restricted reserves	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Balance at 1 August 2023</b>	21,454	-	-	21,454
Surplus from the income and expenditure account	1,915	-	-	1,915
Other comprehensive income	(287)	-	-	(287)
Transfers between revaluation and income and expenditure reserves	-	-	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	1,628	-	-	1,628
<b>Balance at 31 July 2024</b>	23,082	-	-	23,082
Surplus from the income and expenditure account	698	-	-	698
Other comprehensive income	(156)	-	-	(156)
Transfers between revaluation and income and expenditure reserves	-	-	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	542	-	-	542
<b>Balance at 31 July 2025</b>	<b>23,624</b>	-	-	<b>23,624</b>

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Balance Sheet as at 31 July

		2025 £'000	2024 £'000
<b>Non Current assets</b>	<b>Notes</b>		
Tangible fixed assets	10	28,402	27,330
		<u>28,402</u>	<u>27,330</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Trade and other receivables	11	1,316	598
Cash and cash equivalents	15	24,777	23,702
		<u>26,093</u>	<u>24,300</u>
<b>Creditors – amounts falling due within one year</b>	12	(6,358)	(4,500)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>19,735</u>	<u>19,800</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>48,137</b>	<b>47,130</b>
<b>Creditors – amounts falling due after one year</b>	13	(23,105)	(22,211)
<b>Provisions</b>			
Other provisions	14	(1,408)	(1,837)
<b>Total net assets</b>		<u><u>23,624</u></u>	<u><u>23,082</u></u>
<b>Unrestricted reserves</b>			
Income and expenditure account		23,624	23,082
Revaluation reserve		-	-
<b>Total unrestricted reserves</b>		<u>23,624</u>	<u>23,082</u>
<b>Total reserves</b>		<u><u>23,624</u></u>	<u><u>23,082</u></u>

The financial statements on pages 38 to 65 were approved and authorised for issue by the Corporation on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and were signed on its behalf on that date by:

Signed by:

*Joanne Henney*

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**Joanne Henney**  
Chair

Signed by:

*Gill Banks*

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**Gill Banks**  
Principal/Accounting Officer

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Statement of Cash Flows

	Notes	Year ended 31 July 2025 £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 £'000
<b>Cash inflow from operating activities</b>			
Surplus for the year		698	1,915
<b>Adjustment for non cash items</b>			
Depreciation		1,889	1,700
(Increase)/decrease in debtors		(718)	19
Increase/(decrease) in creditors due within one year		1,858	(310)
(Decrease)/increase in provisions		(429)	628
Pensions costs less contributions payable		383	287
Release of Deferred Capital Grants		(1,235)	(1,052)
<b>Adjustment for investing or financing activities</b>			
Investment income		(444)	(686)
Interest payable		-	-
		<u>2,002</u>	<u>2,500</u>
<b>Net cash flow from operating activities</b>			
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Payments made to acquire fixed assets		(2,961)	(2,875)
Receipt of deferred capital grants		2,034	6,257
		<u>(927)</u>	<u>3,382</u>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Interest paid		-	-
		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Increase in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>			
		<u>1,075</u>	<u>5,882</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	15	23,702	17,820
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year	15	24,777	23,702

# Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

## 1. Statement of accounting policies and estimation techniques

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the financial statements.

### Basis of preparation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2019* (the 2019 FE HE SORP), the *College Accounts Direction for 2024-25* and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 – “*The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland*” (FRS 102). The College is a public benefit entity and has therefore applied the relevant public benefit requirements of FRS 102.

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgement in applying the College’s accounting policies.

### Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention

### Basis of consolidation

In accordance with FRS 102, the activities of the student union have not been consolidated because the college does not control those activities.

### Going concern

The activities of the college, together with the factors likely to affect its future development and performance are set out in the Strategic Report. The financial position of the college, its cash flow, liquidity and borrowings are presented in the Financial Statements and accompanying Notes.

The college is reporting net current assets of £19,736k, this is after accounting for deferred capital grants of £1,016k and accrued holiday pay of £341k for which the College does not expect to require cash out flows within the next 12 months.

The College currently has no outstanding loans.

Consequently, the Corporation is confident that the College will have sufficient funds to continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements and have therefore prepared these statements on a going concern basis.

### Recognition of income

#### *Revenue grant funding*

Government revenue grants include funding body recurrent grants and other grants and are accounted for under the accrual model as permitted by FRS 102. Funding body recurrent grants are measured in line with best estimates for the period of what is receivable and depend on the particular income stream involved. Any under achievement for the Adult Education Budget is adjusted for and reflected in the level of recurrent grant recognised in the income and expenditure

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

account. The final grant income is normally determined with the conclusion of the year end reconciliation process with the Funding Body following the year end, and the results of any funding audits. DfE 16–18 learner-responsive funding is not subject to reconciliation and is therefore not subject to contract adjustments.

The recurrent grant from Office for Students, represents the funding allocations attributable to the current financial year and is credited direct to the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Where part of a government grant is deferred, the deferred element is recognised as deferred income within creditors and allocated between creditors due within one year and creditors due after more than one year as appropriate.

Grants (including research grants) from non-government sources are recognised in income when the college is entitled to the income and performance related conditions have been met. Income received in advance of performance related conditions being met is recognised as deferred income within creditors on the balance sheet and released to income as the conditions are met.

### *Capital grant funding*

Government capital grants are capitalised, held as deferred income and recognised in income over the expected useful life of the asset, under the accrual model as permitted by FRS 102. Other, non-governmental, capital grants are recognised in income when the college is entitled to the funds subject to any performance related conditions being met.

Income received in advance of performance related conditions being met is recognised as deferred income within creditors on the balance sheet and released to income as the conditions are met.

### *Fee income*

Income from tuition fees is stated gross of any expenditure which is not a discount and is recognised in the period for which it is received.

### *Investment income*

All income from short-term deposits is credited to the income and expenditure account in the period in which it is earned on a receivable basis.

### **Agency arrangements**

The college acts as an agent in the collection and payment of certain discretionary support funds and any other arrangements. Related payments received from the funding bodies and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the income and expenditure of the college where the college is exposed to minimal risk or enjoys minimal economic benefit related to the transaction.

### **Accounting for post-employment benefits**

Post-employment benefits to employees of the College are principally provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). These are defined benefit plans, which are externally funded and contracted out of the State Second Pension.

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### *Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS)*

The TPS is an unfunded scheme. Contributions to the TPS are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the college in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of valuations using a prospective benefit method.

The TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution plan and the contributions recognised as an expense in the income statement in the periods during which services are rendered by employees.

### *Merseyside Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)*

The LGPS is a funded scheme. The assets of the LGPS are measured using closing fair values. LGPS liabilities are measured using the projected unit credit method and discounted at the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred.

Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in interest and other finance costs.

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in actuarial gains and losses.

The LGPS scheme is currently in surplus. The decision made in the Financial Statements for 2024-25 is to recognise no asset on the balance sheet, irrespective of the calculation which has been undertaken by actuary's arriving at this position. The curtailment of the asset is against actuarial gains to limit the asset to £nil.

### **Short term employment benefits**

Short term employment benefits such as salaries and compensated absences (holiday pay) are recognised as an expense in the year in which the employees render service to the College. Any unused benefits are accrued and measured as the additional amount the College expects to pay as a result of the unused entitlement.

### **Enhanced pensions**

The actual cost of any enhanced ongoing pension to a former member of staff is paid by the college monthly. An estimate of the expected future cost of any enhancement to the ongoing pension of a former member of staff is charged in full to the college's income in the year that the member of staff retires. In subsequent years a charge is made to provisions in the Balance Sheet using the enhanced pension spreadsheet provided by the funding bodies.

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### Non-current assets – tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses.

#### *Land and buildings*

Freehold and leasehold buildings are depreciated on a straight-line basis on the lower of 50 years from the date that the building was brought into use by the college or the estimated life of the building when constructed. Freehold land is not depreciated as it is considered to have an infinite useful life. The college has a policy of depreciating major adaptations to buildings over the period of their useful economic life.

Where land and buildings are acquired with the aid of specific grants, they are capitalised and depreciated as above. The related grants are credited to a deferred income account within creditors, and are released to the income and expenditure account over the expected useful economic life of the related asset on a systematic basis consistent with the depreciation policy. The deferred income is allocated between creditors due within one year and those due after more than one year.

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of any fixed asset may not be recoverable.

#### *Assets under construction*

Assets under construction are accounted for at cost, based on the value of architects' certificates and other direct costs, incurred to 31 July. They are not depreciated until they are brought into use.

#### *Subsequent expenditure on existing fixed assets*

Where significant expenditure is incurred on tangible fixed assets after initial purchase it is charged to income in the period it is incurred, unless it increases the future benefits to the College, in which case it is capitalised and depreciated on the relevant basis.

#### *Equipment*

Equipment costing less than £3,000 per individual item is recognised as expenditure in the period of acquisition, unless it forms part of a capital expenditure project costing more than £3,000. All other equipment is capitalised at cost.

Capitalised equipment is depreciated on a straight-line basis over its remaining useful economic life as follows:

- Buildings – 50 years
- Fixtures and fittings – 10 years
- Equipment – 4 years
- Vehicles – 4 years

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### Borrowing costs

Borrowing costs are recognised as expenditure in the period in which they are incurred.

### Leased assets

Costs in respect of operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term to the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. Any lease premiums or incentives relating to leases signed after 1 August 2014 are spread over the minimum lease term. The college has taken advantage of the transitional exemptions in FRS 102 and has retained the policy of spreading lease premiums and incentives to the date of the first market rent review for leases signed before 1 August 2014.

Leasing agreements which transfer to the College substantially all the benefits and risks of ownership of an asset are treated as finance leases.

Assets held under finance leases are recognised initially at the fair value of the leased asset (or, if lower, the present value of minimum lease payments) at the inception of the lease. The corresponding liability to the lessor is included in the balance sheet as a finance lease obligation. Assets held under finance leases are included in tangible fixed assets and depreciated and assessed for impairment losses in the same way as owned assets.

Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding liability. The finance charges are allocated over the period of the lease in proportion to the capital element outstanding.

### Inventories

Inventories are stated at the lower of their cost and net realisable value, being selling price less costs to complete and sell. Where necessary, provision is made for obsolete, slow-moving and defective items.

### Cash and cash equivalents

Cash includes cash in hand, deposits repayable on demand and overdrafts. Deposits are repayable on demand if they are in practice available within 24 hours without penalty.

Cash equivalents are short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. An investment qualifies as a cash equivalent when it has maturity of 3 months or less from the date of acquisition.

### Financial liabilities and equity

Financial liabilities and equity are classified according to the substance of the financial instrument's contractual obligations, rather than the financial instrument's legal form.

All loans, investments and short-term deposits held by the college are classified as basic financial instruments in accordance with FRS 102. These instruments are initially recorded at the transaction price less any transaction costs (historical cost). FRS 102 requires that basic financial instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost, however, the college has calculated that the

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

difference between the historical cost and amortised cost basis is not material and so these financial instruments are stated on the Balance Sheet at historical cost. Loans and investments that are payable or receivable within one year are not discounted.

### Foreign currency translation

Transactions denominated in foreign currencies are recorded using the rate of exchange ruling at the date of the transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rates of exchange ruling at the end of the financial period with all resulting exchange differences being taken to income in the period in which they arise.

### Taxation

The college is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the College is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by sections 478-488 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

The College is partially exempt in respect of Value Added Tax, so that it can only recover around 1% of the VAT charged on its inputs. Irrecoverable VAT on inputs is included in the costs of such inputs and added to the cost of tangible fixed assets as appropriate, where the inputs themselves are tangible fixed assets by nature.

### Provisions and contingent liabilities

Provisions are recognised when the College has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required to settle the obligation and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the amount expected to be required to settle the obligation is recognised at present value using a pre-tax discount rate. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as a finance cost in the statement of comprehensive income in the period it arises.

A contingent liability arises from a past event that gives the College a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the College. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably. Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

### Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In preparing these financial statements, management have made the following judgements:

- Determine whether leases entered into by the College either as a lessor or a lessee are operating or finance leases. These decisions depend on an assessment of whether the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred from the lessor to the lessee on a lease by lease basis.

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

- Determine whether there are indicators of impairment of the College's tangible assets. Factors taken into consideration in reaching such a decision include the economic viability and expected future financial performance of the asset and where it is a component of a larger cash generating unit, the viability and expected future performance of that unit.

### Other key sources of estimation uncertainty

#### *Tangible fixed assets*

Tangible fixed assets, other than investment properties, are depreciated over their useful lives taking into account residual values, where appropriate. The actual lives of the assets and residual values are assessed annually and may vary depending on a number of factors. In re-assessing asset lives, factors such as technological innovation and maintenance programmes are taken into account. Residual value assessments consider issues such as future market conditions, the remaining life of the asset and projected disposal values.

#### *Local Government Pension Scheme*

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 20, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore, a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 July 2025. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 2 Funding Body grants

	Year ended 31 July	Year ended 31 July
	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
<b>Recurrent grants</b>		
Education and Skills Funding Agency (16–18)	20,226	17,952
Education and Skills Funding Agency (Adult)	99	212
LCR - adult education budget	3,940	4,570
Education and Skills Funding Agency (Apprenticeships)	2,458	2,359
OfS (Higher Education)	83	110
<b>Other funding body grants</b>		
Education and Skills Funding Agency (Other)	56	49
<b>Specific Grants</b>		
Releases of government capital grants	1,235	1,053
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,097</b>	<b>26,305</b>

*In accordance with OfS Regulatory Advice 9, paragraph 32 the following OfS Income is contained within notes 2 and 3.*

	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
<b>OfS Grant and Fee Income</b>		
Grant Income from OfS	83	129
Grant Income from Other Bodies	28,014	26,176
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,097</b>	<b>26,305</b>

### 3 Tuition fees and education contracts

	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
Fees for FE loan supported courses	299	324
Fees for HE loan supported courses	1,162	1,188
Commercial Income	30	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,491</b>	<b>1,536</b>

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

<b>4 Other grants and contracts</b>	<b>Year ended 31 July 2025 £'000</b>	<b>Year ended 31 July 2024 £'000</b>
Other grants and contracts	1,975	1,725
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,975</b>	<b>1,725</b>
<b>5 Other income</b>	<b>2025 £'000</b>	<b>2024 £'000</b>
Non-government capital grants	-	-
Miscellaneous income	260	258
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>6 Investment income</b>	<b>2025 £'000</b>	<b>2024 £'000</b>
Other interest receivable	444	686
	<b>444</b>	<b>686</b>

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 7 Staff costs

The average number of persons (including key management personnel) employed by the College during the year, described as full-time equivalents, was:

	Year ended 31 July	Year ended 31 July
	2025 No.	2024 No.
Teaching staff	222	207
Non-teaching staff	245	238
	<b>467</b>	<b>445</b>
<b>Staff costs for the above persons</b>		
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2025</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Wages and salaries	15,903	14,349
Social security costs	1,540	1,325
Other pension costs	3,316	2,545
<b>Payroll sub total</b>	<b>20,759</b>	<b>18,219</b>
Contracted out staffing services	1,740	1,334
	<b>22,499</b>	<b>19,553</b>
Apprenticeship Levy	65	58
	<b>22,564</b>	<b>19,612</b>
Fundamental restructuring costs - contractual	38	62
<b>Total Staff Costs</b>	<b>22,602</b>	<b>19,673</b>

The Corporation has salary sacrifice arrangements in place for the cycle to work scheme.

### Key management personnel

Key management personnel are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the College and are represented by the College's Executive Team which comprises the Principal/CEO, three Vice Principals and the Governance Professional.

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 7 Staff costs (continued)

#### Emoluments of key management personnel, Accounting Officer and other higher paid staff

	2025 No.	2024 No.
The number of key management personnel including the Accounting Officer was:	5	5
	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>

The number of key management personnel and other staff who received annual emoluments, excluding pension contributions and employers national insurance but including benefits in kind, in the following ranges was:

	Key management personnel		Other staff	
	Year ended 31 July 2025 No.	Year ended 31 July 2024 No.	Year ended 31 July 2025 No.	Year ended 31 July 2024 No.
£60,001 to £65,000	-	-	1	2
£65,001 to £70,000	-	2	1	1
£70,001 to £75,000	1	-	5	2
£75,001 to £80,000	-	-	1	2
£80,001 to £85,000	-	-	-	-
£85,001 to £90,000	-	-	-	-
£90,001 to £95,000	-	2	-	-
£95,001 to £100,000	3	-	-	-
£100,001 to £110,000	-	-	-	-
£110,001 to £120,000	-	-	-	-
£120,001 to £130,000	-	-	-	-
£130,001 to £140,000	-	-	-	-
£140,001 to £150,000	-	-	-	-
£150,001 to £160,000	-	1	-	-
£160,001 to £170,000	1	-	-	-
	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 7 Staff costs (continued)

Key management personnel emoluments are made up as follows:

	<b>2025</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2024</b> <b>£'000</b>
Basic salary	487	428
Performance related pay and bonus	-	2
Benefits in kind	-	-
	<u>487</u>	<u>431</u>
Pension contributions	129	104
	<u>616</u>	<u>535</u>
<b>Total emoluments</b>	<b><u>616</u></b>	<b><u>535</u></b>

The above emoluments include amounts payable to the Accounting Officer (who is also the highest paid officer) of:

	<b>2025</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2024</b> <b>£'000</b>
Basic salary	163	156
Performance related pay and bonus	-	1
Benefits in kind	-	-
	<u>163</u>	<u>157</u>
Pension contributions	47	40

The members of the Corporation other than the Accounting Officer and the staff members did not receive any payment from the institution other than the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses incurred in the course of their duties.

### Relationship of Principal/Chief Executive pay and remuneration expressed as a multiple

	<b>2025</b> <b>£'000</b>
Principal and CEO's basic salary as a multiple of the median of all staff	6.70
Principal and CEO's total remuneration as a multiple of the median of all staff	7.14

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

The governing body adopted AoC's Senior Staff Remuneration Code in July 2019 and assesses pay in line with its principles.

The remuneration package of key management staff, including the Principal and Chief Executive, is subject to annual review by the Remuneration Committee of the governing body which uses benchmarking information to provide objective guidance to the Corporation.

### 8 Other operating expenses

	Year ended 31 July 2025 £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 £'000
Teaching costs	933	800
Non-teaching costs	4,150	5,101
Premises costs	2,088	946
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,171</b>	<b>6,847</b>

### Other operating expenses include:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Auditors' remuneration:		
Financial statements audit	36	32
Other services provided by financial statements auditor	1	7
Internal audit fees	42	40
Hire of assets under operating leases	27	26

### 9 Interest and other finance costs

	Year ended 31 July 2025 £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 £'000
On bank loans, overdrafts and other loans:	-	-
On finance leases	-	-
Enhanced pension finance costs	88	562
Pension finance costs (note 20)	(181)	(187)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(93)</b>	<b>375</b>

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 10 Tangible fixed assets

	Land and buildings		Equipment and Fixtures	Vehicles	Assets in the Course of Construction	Total
	Freehold	Long leasehold				
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>						
At 1 August 2024	20,810	10,457	13,198	163	1,491	46,119
Additions	-	-	702	-	2,259	2,961
Transfers	232	-	803	-	(1,035)	-
<b>At 31 July 2025</b>	<b>21,042</b>	<b>10,457</b>	<b>14,703</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>2,715</b>	<b>49,080</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>						
At 1 August 2024	7,426	1,831	9,491	41	-	18,789
Charge for the year	513	194	1,142	40	-	1,889
<b>At 31 July 2025</b>	<b>7,939</b>	<b>2,025</b>	<b>10,633</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,678</b>
<b>Net book value at 31 July 2025</b>	<b>13,103</b>	<b>8,432</b>	<b>4,070</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>2,715</b>	<b>28,402</b>
<b>Net book value at 31 July 2024</b>	<b>13,384</b>	<b>8,626</b>	<b>3,707</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>1,491</b>	<b>27,330</b>

Land and Buildings are valued at Historical Cost.

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 11 Trade and other receivables

	Year ended 31 July 2025 £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	506	119
Prepayments and accrued income	811	479
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>1,316</u></b>	<b><u>598</u></b>

### 12 Creditors—amounts falling due within one year

	Year ended 31 July 2025 £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 £'000
Trade payables	1,623	787
Other taxation and social security	781	656
Accruals and deferred income	1,001	489
Accrued holiday balances	341	499
Deferred income—government capital grants	1,016	1,112
Capital grants held on account	308	267
Other amounts held on account	675	639
Amounts owed to the DfE	613	52
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>6,358</u></b>	<b><u>4,500</u></b>

### 13 Creditors—amounts falling due after one year

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Deferred income—government capital grants >1 yr	23,105	22,211
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>23,105</u></b>	<b><u>22,211</u></b>

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 14 Provisions

	Defined Benefit Obligations £'000	Enhanced pensions £'000	Other £'000	Total £'000
<b>At 1 August 2024</b>	-	<b>1,837</b>	-	<b>1,837</b>
Expenditure in the period	-	-	-	-
Transferred to income and expenditure account	-	(429)	-	(429)
<b>At 31 July 2025</b>	-	<b>1,408</b>	-	<b>1,408</b>

Defined benefit obligations relate to the liabilities under the College's membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Further details are given in note 20.

The enhanced pension provision relates to the cost of staff who have already left the College's employ and commitments for reorganisation costs from which the College cannot reasonably withdraw at the balance sheet date. This provision has been recalculated in accordance with guidance issued by the funding bodies.

The principal assumptions for this calculation are:

	2025	2024
Inflation Rate	2.70%	2.80%
Interest rate	5.50%	4.80%

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 15 Cash and cash equivalents

	At 1 August 2024	Cash flows	Other changes	At 31 July 2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cash and cash equivalents	23,702	1,075	-	24,777
<b>Total</b>	<u>23,702</u>	<u>1,075</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>24,777</u>

### 16 Capital commitments

	Year ended 31 July 2025 £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 £'000
Commitments contracted for at 31 July	<u>3,259</u>	<u>-</u>

### 17 Lease Obligations

At 31 July the College had minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Year ended 31 July 2025 £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 £'000
<b>Future minimum lease payments due</b>		
<b>Land and buildings</b>		
Expiring within one year	-	-
Expiring between two and five years inclusive	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Other</b>		
Expiring within one year	-	3
Expiring between two and five years inclusive	-	-
Later than five years	<u>-</u>	<u>3</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>3</u>

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 18 Contingencies

There are no contingent liabilities.

### 19 Events after the reporting period

There are no events after the reporting period.

### 20 Defined benefit obligations

The College's employees belong to two principal post-employment benefit plans: the Teachers' Pension Scheme England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff; and the Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) (LGPS) for non-teaching staff. Both are multi-employer defined benefit plans. The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries. The latest formal actuarial valuation of TPS was at 31 March 2020 and of LGPS 31 March 2022.

	<b>Year ended 31 July 2025 £'000</b>	<b>Year ended 31 July 2024 £'000</b>
<b>Total pension cost for the year</b>		
Teachers Pension Scheme: contributions paid	2,346	1,666
Local Government Pension Scheme:		
Contributions paid	1,135	1,034
FRS 102 (28) charge	<u>25</u>	<u>(100)</u>
Charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Income	1,160	934
Enhanced pension charge to Statement of Comprehensive Income	<u>(281)</u>	<u>(266)</u>
<b>Total pension cost for the year</b>	<b><u><u>3,225</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>2,334</u></u></b>

### Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. These regulations apply to teachers in schools, colleges and other educational establishments. Membership is automatic for teachers and lecturers at eligible institutions. Teachers and lecturers are able to opt out of the TPS. The TPS is an unfunded scheme and members contribute on a 'pay as you go' basis

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 20 Defined benefit obligations (continued)

these contributions, along with those made by employers, are credited to the Exchequer under arrangements governed by the above Act. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102 (28.11), the TPS is a multi-employer pension plan. The College is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan.

Accordingly, the College has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution plan. The College has set out above the information available on the plan and the implications for the College in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

The valuation of the TPS is carried out in line with regulations made under the Public Service Pension Act 2013. Valuations credit the teachers' pension account with a real rate of return assuming funds are invested in notional investments that produce that real rate of return.

The latest actuarial review of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education (the Department) in October 2023. The valuation reported total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service at the effective date of £262 billion, and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222 billion giving a notional past service deficit of £40 billion (compared to £22 billion in the 2016 valuation) As a result of the valuation, new employer contribution rates rose to 28.68% from April 2024 (compared to 23.68% during 2018/9).

A full copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation can be found on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website.

The pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £2,346m (2024: £1,666m). The Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) is a funded defined-benefit plan, with the assets held in separate funds administered by Wirral Borough Council . The total contribution made for the year ended 31 July 2025 was £1,540m, of which employer's contributions totalled £1,135m and employees' contributions totalled £405k. The agreed contribution rates for future years are 20.8 % for employers and range from 5.5% to 12.5% for employees, depending on salary according to a national scale.

#### Principal actuarial assumptions

The following information is based upon a full actuarial valuation of the fund at 31 July 2025 by a qualified independent actuary

	<b>At 31 July 2025</b>	<b>At 31 July 2024</b>
Rate of increase in salaries	4.00%	4.10%
Future pensions increases	2.60%	2.70%
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.50%	2.60%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums	50.00%	50.00%

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 20 Defined benefit obligations (continued)

The current mortality assumptions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on retirement age 65 are:

	<b>At 31 July 2025</b>	<b>At 31 July 2024</b>
	<b>years</b>	<b>years</b>
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	20.6	20.8
Females	23.3	23.4
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	21.7	22.0
Females	24.7	25.1

### Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

The College's share of the assets in the plan and the expected rates of return were:

	<b>Long-term rate of return expected at</b>	<b>Fair Value at</b>	<b>Long- term rate of return expected at</b>	<b>Fair Value at</b>
	<b>31 July 2025</b>	<b>31 July 2025 £'000</b>	<b>31 July 2024</b>	<b>31 July 2024 £'000</b>
Equities	42.8%	20,490	41.1%	18,559
Government bonds	16.1%	7,708	17.5%	7,903
Other bonds	4.9%	2,346	6.0%	2,710
Property	8.6%	4,117	8.7%	3,929
Cash	7.2%	3,447	5.5%	2,484
Other	20.4%	9,767	21.2%	9,574
<b>Total market value of assets</b>		<b>47,875</b>		<b>45,159</b>
<b>Weighted average expected long term rate of return</b>	6.01%		4.54%	
<b>Actual(loss)/return on plan assets</b>		<b>2,716</b>		<b>1,961</b>

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 20 Defined benefit obligations (continued)

The amount included in the balance sheet in respect of the defined benefit pension plan is as follows:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Fair value of plan assets	47,875	45,159
Present value of plan liabilities	(38,066)	(42,060)
Present value of unfunded liabilities		
Restriction on pension surplus at 31 July 2024	(3,099)	(3,080)
Restriction on pension surplus at 31 July 2025	(6,710)	(19)
<b>Net pensions asset/(liability) (note 14)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income in respect of the plan are as follows:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
<b>Amounts included in staff costs</b>		
Current service cost	1,127	906
Past service cost		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,127</b>	<b>906</b>
<b>Amounts included in investment income</b>		
Net interest (cost)	181	187
	<b>181</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>Amounts recognised in Other Comprehensive Income</b>		
Return on pension plan assets	3,128	2,852
Experience gains arising on defined benefit obligations	402	(181)
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of plan liabilities	-	-
<b>Amount recognised in Other Comprehensive Income</b>	<b>3,530</b>	<b>2,671</b>

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 20 Defined benefit obligations (continued)

#### Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

#### Movement in net defined benefit (liability)/asset during the year

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
(Deficit)/Surplus in scheme at 1 August	-	-
Movement in year:		
Current service cost	(1,127)	(906)
Employer contributions	1,135	1,034
Past service cost	-	-
Net interest on the defined (liability)/asset	181	187
Administration expenses	(33)	(28)
Curtailments or settlements	(9,089)	(3,099)
Actuarial (loss)/gain	<u>9,653</u>	<u>(268)</u>
<b>Net defined (liability)/asset at 31 July</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

#### Asset and liability reconciliation

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
<b>Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations</b>		
<b>Defined benefit obligations at start of period</b>	42,060	40,118
Current service cost	1,127	906
Interest cost	2,023	2,037
Contributions by scheme participants	405	368
Experience gains and losses on defined benefit obligations	29	(316)
Changes in financial assumptions	(5,659)	1,212
Estimated benefits paid	(1,919)	(2,265)
Past service cost	-	-
Curtailments and settlements	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Defined benefit obligations at end of period</b>	<u><b>38,066</b></u>	<u><b>42,060</b></u>

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 20 Defined benefit obligations (continued)

#### Reconciliation of assets

<b>Fair value of plan assets at start of period</b>	45,159	43,198
Interest on plan assets	2,204	2,224
Return on plan assets	924	628
Employer contributions	1,135	1,034
Administration expenses	(33)	(28)
Contributions by scheme participants	405	368
Estimated benefits paid	<u>(1,919)</u>	<u>(2,265)</u>
<b>Assets at end of period</b>	<b><u>47,875</u></b>	<b><u>45,159</u></b>

### 21 Related party transactions

Due to the nature of the College's operations and the composition of the Board of Governors being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, it is inevitable that transactions will take place with organisations in which a member of the Board of Governors may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the College's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures.

The total expenses paid to or on behalf of the Governors during the year was £397; (2023-24: £0).

No Governor has received any remuneration or waived payments from the College or its subsidiaries during the year (2023-24, none).

## Wirral Metropolitan College – Notes to the Accounts

### 22 Amounts disbursed as agent

#### Learner support funds

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Brought forward from prior years	40	59
Funding body grants – bursary support	428	462
Funding body grants – discretionary learner support	498	488
Funding body grants – residential bursaries		
Other funding body grants	361	401
Interest earned		
	1,327	1,410
Disbursed to students	1,015	1,311
Transfers		
Administration costs	50	59
	262	40
Balance unspent as at 31 July, included in creditors	262	40

Funding body grants are available solely for students. In the majority of instances, the College only acts as a paying agent. In these circumstances, the grants and related disbursements are therefore excluded from the Statement of Comprehensive Income (except Discretionary Learner Support which is part of the Adult Education Budget).